

Communication Skills

Lecture 1
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F E R G U S O N, career skills Library **Communication Skills**, THIRD EDITION page 1- page 5

INTRODUCTION

Did you Know

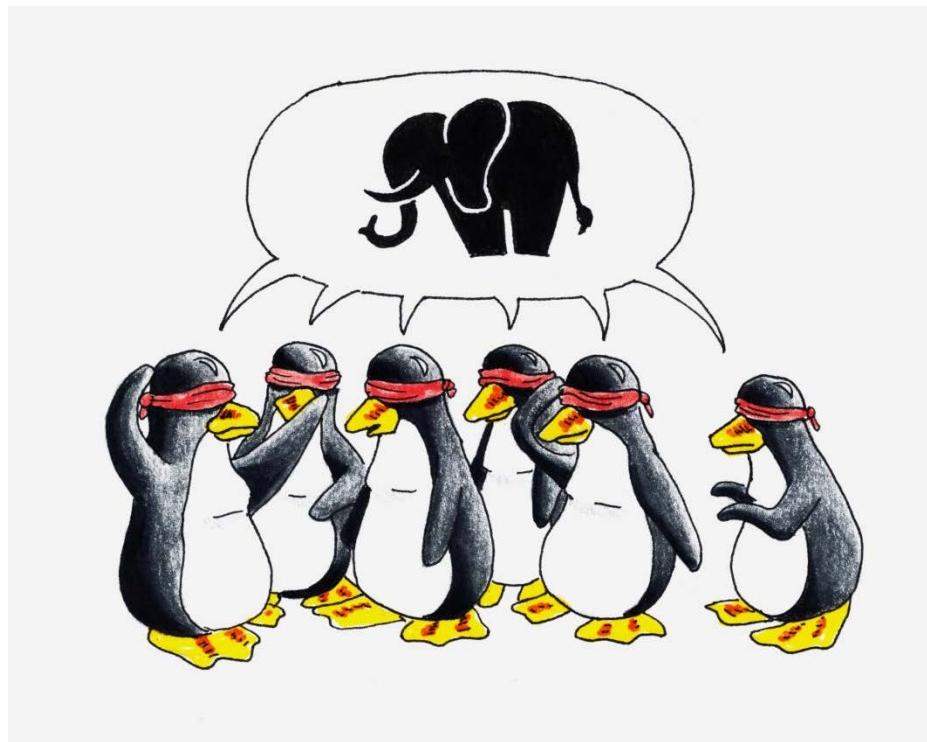
- Employers surveyed in 2007 by the National Association of Colleges and Employers rated communication skills (verbal and written) as very-to-extremely important for job candidates.
- Communication involves at least two people: the sender and the receiver. We'll look at four types of communication between senders and receivers:
 - Writing
 - Speaking
 - Listening
 - Conducting meetings.

Introduction

- the word *communication* is derives from the Latin *communis*, meaning ‘common’, ‘shared’. It belongs to the family of words that includes *communion*, *communism* and *community*.
- Until we have shared information with another person, we haven’t communicated it.
- They have to see the information the same way we do.

Introduction

- *“Communication is the process of creating shared understanding”*



Introduction

HOW WE SPEND OUR COMMUNICATION TIME

Writing	9%
Reading	16%
Talking	30%
Listening	45%

Introduction

- Today, meetings are a common method for making decisions
- study by one university estimated that \$37 billion is lost annually through unproductive meetings.

Introduction

- For good communication
 - Understand the purpose of a communication (1st objectives)
 - Analyzing the audience
 - Communicating with words as well as with body language

Activity 2 – Communication challenge

Reflect on a personal experience with communication difficulties:

Who was involved?

What was the situation?

What was said?

What was the outcome?

Why do we communicate?

Improve your communication skills / Alan Barker. -- 2nd ed. page 8 to 23

HOW CONVERSATIONS WORK

Starting a conversation

- For most of us, starting a conversation with someone we don't know is stressful.
- Initiating and maintaining mutually enjoyable conversations seems a mystery many of us would like to solve.
- The key is to find common ground. The two cardinal sins to avoid are:
 - Talking about yourself; and
 - Asking the other person a direct question about themselves.
- Doing either will *increase* the tension in the conversation.
- Instead, look for something in your common situation to talk about Then look for a question to ask about that situation.
- The other person must not feel that you are interrogating them.
- Take the initiative. Put them at ease, and you will soon relax yourself.

Conversation

- The main way we trade ideas is in conversation
- Conversations are the way we create shared meaning
- All the other ways we communicate – interviews, presentations, written documents, meetings – are variations on this central mode of communication
- *If you want to communicate better, begin by improving your conversations*

What is a conversation?

- Conversations are verbal dances. The word derives from the Latin, ‘to move around with’
- A conversation has rules.
- A conversation is a dynamic of talking and listening.
- *The quality of the conversation depends more on the quality of the listening than on the quality of the speaking.*

What is a conversation?

- The best conversations balance advocacy and enquiry. They are a rich mix of talking and listening, of stating views and asking questions.
- The two cardinal sins to avoid in a conversation are:
 - talking about yourself
 - asking the other person a direct question about themselves.

Conversation Ex.

- Ex.
- Think of a conversation that went very bad and list the reasons for that

Why do conversations go wrong?

- Conversation is a life skill
- Conversation fails because of failure to make one of its four components right
 - **context**
 - relationship
 - structure
 - behavior

Putting conversations in context

- All conversations have a context. They happen for a reason.
- Most conversations are part of developing relationship.
- Many conversations fail because one or both of us ignore the context
- If we don't check that we understand why the conversation is happening, we may very quickly start to misunderstand each other.

Putting conversations in context

- One of the most persistent complaints against managers is that they are not there to talk to: ‘I never see him’, ‘She has no idea what I do’, ‘He simply refuses to listen’.

Putting conversations in context

- Other obvious problems that afflict the context of the conversation include:
 - not giving enough time to the conversation;
 - holding the conversation at the wrong time;
 - conversing in an uncomfortable, busy or noisy place;
 - a lack of privacy;
 - distractions.

Putting conversations in context

- All conversations start from assumptions. If we leave them unquestioned, misunderstandings and conflict can quickly arise. For example, we might assume that:
 - we both know what we are talking about;
 - we need to agree;
 - we know how the other person views the situation;
 - the other person is somehow to blame for the problem;
 - we can be brutally honest;
 - we need to solve the other person's problem;
 - we're right and they're wrong.

Putting conversations in context

Key factors: context

- **Objectives.** Do you both know why you are holding the conversation?
- **Time.** Is this the right time to be holding this conversation? What is the history behind the conversation? Is it part of a larger process?
- **Place.** Are you conversing in a place that is comfortable, quiet and free from distractions?
- **Assumptions.** Do you both understand the assumptions that you are starting from? Do you need to explore them before going further?

Putting conversations in context

- Ex
- Put a sample context of a conversation that you intend to make